



SOULBURY OFFICERS' SIDE PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE CLAIM 2022

This pay and conditions of service claim is submitted by the Officers' Side of the Soulbury Committee national negotiating body, comprising the Association of Educational Psychologists, the National Education Union and Prospect.

The professional workforce covered by the terms of the Soulbury national agreement continues to support local authorities in discharging their statutory responsibilities in respect of schools and other educational settings, children and young people (CYP) and their families. Despite the many ongoing changes in local government and local authority functions, these remain key responsibilities in ensuring the highest standards of education and achievement for our young people.

The Soulbury Officers' Side represents educational improvement professionals, educational psychologists and managers of young people's & community services employed by local authorities.

Soulbury officers work with schools and other educational settings to co-ordinate and disseminate key information, and ensure continuity of service and provision. Their incredible professionalism and flexibility during the pandemic underlined the need for them to be properly valued and supported in terms of pay and conditions.

The Officers' Side was reluctant to accept the pay offer for 2021-22 but we welcome the agreement to review on a without prejudice basis the current Soulbury pay structure and the role of the Soulbury Officer. Our proposals would cost very little when few Soulbury officers are paid at the bottom of the Soulbury pay scales and we are aware that some are paid more than the maximum of the appropriate scale.

The priorities of the submission are as follows:

- (1) A significant pay increase of at least 9% on all pay points, which will begin to address the substantial real terms cuts which Soulbury employees have, like other public sector workers, suffered since 2010.
- (2) Discussions to review the current Soulbury pay structure and the role of the Soulbury Officer.
- (3) A review of London Area Payments.

SOULBURY PAY

The Officers' Side believes that its pay claim is supported by the available evidence on recruitment and retention, trends in pay comparability for Soulbury staff and the impact of below inflation pay increases.

Pay for Soulbury staff – the Officers' Side claim

The Officers' Side believes that the pay scales for Soulbury officers should be increased significantly to address the considerations set out in this submission. The Officers Side unions are seeking an increase of at least 9% in the value of all Soulbury pay scale points and allowances from 1 September 2022.

Recruitment and retention issues

The most recent Soulbury workforce survey, carried out in February-May 2018, showed that 63% of respondents reported that they had experienced difficulties when recruiting over the previous 12 months. This figure was far greater than the 22% of respondents who reported this in 2013. It was also shown that half of educational psychology service respondents were concerned about their authority's ability to fulfill the entirety of its statutory obligations in education. The proportion was about a quarter (27%) for the educational improvement service.

In a survey of Soulbury members (June 2021) 29% of Prospect members said that there were vacancies in their team, and where there were vacancies the majority (56%) had been for more than six months.

Another insight into recruitment and retention is provided by an analysis of advertisements for EP vacancies placed by LAs in the Association of Educational Psychologists' member bulletin.

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
390	333	371	480	457	477	265*

*as at May 24 2022

It was reported that 11% of main scale posts are advertised at points A1-6, 43% advertised at points A2-7 and 46% advertised at points 3-8 – and many offer a starting salary of point 4 regardless of the scale being advertised. Most main grade vacancies are advertised using the maximum range available and many more senior vacancies are advertised on EIP scale points in order to offer more money than permitted by the EP B scale. An increasing number of authorities say that they are obliged to use agency staff and associates (where they are available) in order to try to meet statutory SEND deadlines.

Many of the EPs commissioned via agencies have previously worked for LA services but have left because of the increasingly high workloads (which are exacerbated when staff leave) and the higher pay being offered by agencies. This incurs higher costs than employing on Soulbury pay rates and has a significant impact on budgets. Authorities should be encouraged to employ suitable staff and only use zero hours contracts with locums when absolutely necessary, for example, to cover peaks in workload/vacancies.

In 2019 a report by the Institute for Employment Research at Warwick University, commissioned by the DfE, noted the following:

“Over two-thirds (68%) of PEPs surveyed reported difficulties in recruiting to fill vacant posts, resulting in a shortage of EPs and insufficient staff to cope with demands. Two-thirds (66%) of

LA PEPs said that they had at least one vacancy for a permanent EP post and of these, 83% reported that they consistently experienced recruitment difficulties.

“Of the LA PEPs surveyed, 93% said that they were experiencing more demand for EP services than could currently be met. The most commonly cited demand side factor contributing to a shortage of EPs in LAs was the increase in statutory assessment work following the SEND reforms in 2014. More than three quarters of the QEPs surveyed thought that their workload was increasing (78%) and that they never seemed to have enough time to get everything done on their job (76%)”¹

The continuing increases in the numbers of Education, Health and Care assessments for children and young people (CYP) with SEND (in 2021 93,302 EHC assessments were requested, compared with 75,951 such requests in 2020, an increase of 23%²). The majority of these requests subsequently require advice to be provided by EPs. Staffing shortages mean that a number of local authorities are not able to meet the needs of these CYP. It should be noted that psychologists are in the Government’s list of shortage occupations.³

Pay in real terms

With a combination of pay freezes and below inflation increases from 2010 onwards, the real value of Soulbury officers’ pay has been cut significantly. This trend was reversed slightly by the 2.75% pay increase from September 2020 but resumed with the 1.75% pay increase from September 2021. The Retail Prices Index was 4.9% in September 2021 and has since increased rapidly to more than 10%. It is unlikely to be much lower in September 2022 and the latest Treasury average of forecasts for RPI in the fourth quarter of 2022 available at the time of writing was 10%.⁴

Cumulatively, between September 2009 and September 2021, inflation rose by 39.2% when measured by the Retail Prices Index or 26.1% when measured by the Consumer Prices Index. Soulbury pay increases over this period, on the other hand, have an aggregate value of only 13.75%. If Soulbury officers’ pay had risen between September 2009 and September 2021 in line with the increase in the Retail Prices Index, their pay rates would be much higher as set out below:

Soulbury pay shortfall

Education Improvement Professionals

EIP point 8	£57,488 compared to actual £46,035
EIP point 20	£76,598 compared to actual £61,338

Educational Psychologists

Scale A point 8	£65,488 compared to actual £52,440
Scale B point 8	£74,249 compared to actual £59,456

Soulbury officers have also faced significant increases in pension contributions, greater than those for most other local government employees, under the LGPS’s tiered contribution

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https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/people/clare/publications/research_on_the_educational_psychologist_workforce_march_2019_published.pdf

² <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-shortage-occupations-for-health-and-education/skilled-worker-visa-shortage-occupations-for-healthcare-and-education>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forecasts-for-the-uk-economy-may-2022>

arrangements. Most Soulbury officers are now paying 8.5% or even 9.9% of their pay.

With inflation expected to remain high, a pay increase of at least 9% is necessary to avoid adding to the pay losses in real terms since 2010.

Pay comparability with employees generally

While the pay increases of Soulbury officers have been suppressed, average earnings elsewhere in the economy have continued to grow.

Between 2009 and 2021, average earnings across the whole economy showed an increase of 27% compared to the Soulbury pay increase of 13.75% referred to above. Earnings across the economy rose by 4.1% between September 2020 and September 2021, while the Soulbury agreement for September 2021 provided a lower increase of 1.75%. It is forecast that earnings will continue to increase at an annual rate of about 4% in 2022 (whole year forecasts). The median average for pay agreements was 4.4% in the three months up to January 2022 according to the Labour Research Department's Payline database.

The sharp reduction in earnings in 2020 caused by COVID-19 was temporary and it remains important to improve the position of Soulbury pay relative to earnings in the wider economy.

Pay comparability with appropriate professional comparators

For education improvement professionals, the Officers' Side continues to believe that the importance of being able to recruit from senior levels of the teaching profession for many Soulbury roles means that pay comparisons with that group continue to be relevant.

The three examples below demonstrate the pay gap which has developed between Soulbury pay and the pay of school leaders. This will make it more difficult for councils to recruit from senior levels of the teaching profession.

Soulbury pay and professional comparisons

Soulbury Senior EIPs

Minimum point	£52,860	point 13
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Head teachers Group 5¹

Median salary point	£86,061	point L30
Typical range	£76,141 to £88,187	points L25-L31

Soulbury Lead EIPs

Minimum point	£61,388	point 20
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Head teachers Group 7

Median salary point	£99,681	point L36
Typical range ¹	£90,379 to £104,687	points L32-L38

Senior professionals in education²

Median salary	£68,852	
Interquartile range	£63,253 to £81,165	

¹ "Typical pay range" points taken from STRB Pay Survey (September 2008 table 3 p34-35) Values of pay points taken from joint teacher union advice on reference pay points (September 2021)

² "Senior professionals in education" taken from Incomes Data Research pay levels database

For educational psychologists, the greater range of salaries within the teachers' pay range

could mean that psychology graduates will be tempted by the opportunity for higher pay within the teaching profession rather than opt to take much longer to train as an EP for lower financial rewards. Another appropriate professional comparator is with clinical psychologists employed and paid under the NHS Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. Most psychology graduates will look carefully at the training routes and pay structures of both careers before committing themselves to the 3 years' doctoral training necessary in order to become an EP.

Soulbury EP pay and professional comparisons

Soulbury EPs

Typical scale	£42,811 to £52,440	Scale A points 3-8
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Clinical Psychologist (NHS)¹

Typical scale range	£47,126 to £53,219	band 8a
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	£54,764 to £63,862	band 8b
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Soulbury Senior EPs

Typical scale	£52,440 to £57,544	Scale B points 3-6
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Soulbury Principal EPs

Typical scale	£59,546 to £63,177	Scale B points 8-11
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Consultant Clinical Psychologist (NHS)¹

Typical scale range	£65,664 to £75,874	band 8c
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	£78,192 to £90,387	band 8d
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Clinical Psychologists also have possible career progression to Head of Service within the NHS which pays at Band 9 level¹

Typical scale range	£93,735 to £108,075	band 9
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¹ Agenda for Change – Pay Rates (April 2021)

Pay in London

The Officers' Side believes that the London Area Payments for Soulbury officers should be reviewed. The current payments are £3,327 for Inner London, £2,195 for Outer London and £848 for the Fringe. This compares to the following:

The NHS pays a London high-cost supplement at 20% of basic salary for Inner London subject to a minimum of £4,608 and a maximum of £7,097, 15% for Outer London subject to a minimum of £3,898 and a maximum of £4,967, and 5% for the Fringe subject to a minimum of £1,066 and a maximum of £1,845;

Sixth form colleges pay £4,136 in Inner London, £2,756 in Outer London and £1,092 in the Fringe;

Schools pay at least £5,088 in Inner London, £3,486 in Outer London and £1,171 in the Fringe.

The low level of the payments in comparison to those in education and the NHS are another obstacle to recruitment and retention.

PAY SPINES AND THE WORK OF SOULBURY OFFICERS

The Officers' Side welcomes the commitment to have discussions on a without prejudice basis to review the current Soulbury pay structure and the role of the Soulbury Officer.

The pandemic has meant additional workload, greater complexity of work, remote working and increased responsibilities for Soulbury officers who will be needed to deliver the urgent priorities of the Department for Education. The White Paper/Schools Bill has increased the need to consider the roles of Soulbury education advisers following the pandemic. In particular, that they are Soulbury roles and work on 'school improvement' in a broad sense.

The discussions about the role of the Soulbury officer could include the following:

- Flexible working, time off in lieu (TOIL) systems, hybrid working and annual leave;
- Management of workload – particularly ringfencing time required for statutory work before “selling time” to schools;
- Car allowances in general with an acknowledgement of electric vehicles, current lease arrangements and the requirement to have access to electric charging points,
- Family friendly policies such as suitable accommodation to support breastfeeding.

It is important for the Soulbury Committee to ensure that the pay structure reflects the value of Soulbury officers' work. Few Soulbury officers are paid at the bottom of the Soulbury pay scales and we are aware that some are paid more than the maximum of the appropriate scale. The Officers' Side proposed the following changes in our previous claim:

“In the spine for Education Improvement Professionals, points 1-4 should be eliminated, making point 5 the first point of the spine. There should be two additional points after point 50.

“In the scale for Trainee Educational Psychologists, point 1 should be eliminated, making point 2 the first point of the scale.

“In the scale for Assistant Educational Psychologists, point 1 should be eliminated, making point 2 the first point of the scale.

“In Scale A for Educational Psychologists, points 1-3 should be eliminated, making point 4 the first point of the scale. The three six point scales permitted to local authorities would then become 4-9, 5-10 and 6-11, with authorities retaining the right to choose which of those scales they use. There should be three additional points after point 11.

“In the scale for Senior and Principal Educational Psychologists, points 1-3 should be eliminated, making point 4 the first point of the scale. There should be three additional points after point 18.

“The criteria for the third SPA point should be reviewed to ensure that officers are not unreasonably denied progression and the addition of a fourth SPA point should be considered.”

The Officers' Side would like to add the following:

- Paragraph 4.6 of the Soulbury Report should be amended to state that main scale educational psychologists would be awarded an allowance equivalent to one additional incremental point on Scale A for the duration of supervising assistant educational psychologists as well as for supervising trainee educational psychologists.
- All educational psychologists should be reimbursed the costs of their required two yearly registration with the Health and Care Professions Council - the next renewal will be in

April 2023 and will cost £196.24.

The review of SPA points should include the following:

- A joint survey of local authorities to gather data on distribution of SPA points and their application.
- A review of the joint Soulbury guidance on SPA points to ensure clarity and consistent application.
- Consideration of a fourth SPA point.

CONCLUSION

We believe that a pay increase of at least 9% is appropriate and necessary to avoid another real terms pay cut for Soulbury officers. It would also go some way towards showing them that their work during the pandemic was valued by local authorities.

Soulbury Officers' Side
June 2022